

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VIENTI 04858 161200Z

41

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 PRS-01

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 SAJ-01 SAM-01 IGA-01

/052 W

----- 074290

R 161034Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4800

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 4858

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, PFOR, LA, US

SUBJ: EARLY LPF REACTIONS TO REALIZATION OF U.S. AID TERMINATION

1. THE MESSAGE THAT NO MORE AID WILL BE COMING FROM U.S. IS BEGINNING TO FILTER OUT, AND THE INITIAL REACTION IS ONE OF CONSIDERABLE SHOCK. IN PAST TWO EVENINGS SUCCESSIVELY, I HAD OCCASION TO TALK ON THE FIRST TO DR. KHAMSENGKEO SENGSAITHITH, OSTENSIBLE CHEF DE CABINET OF MININFO, AND ON THE SECOND TO SOUBANH SRITHIRATH, OSTENSIBLE CHEF DE CABINET OF MINFONAF. BOTH, WE ARE NOW CONVINCED, ARE, IF NOT IN NAME, AT LEAST IN FACT, POLITICAL COMMISSAR TYPES: DEVOTED TO PARTY, FULLY EDUCATED TO PARTY LINE, CARRYING THE PARTY'S CONFIDENCE AND WITH IT CONSIDERABLE AUTHORITY. THEY ARE, AT HEART, HARD, DETERMINED, DEDICATED AND INTELLIGENT MEN. CONVERSATIONS WITH THEM THEREFORE ARE THE BEST BAROMETERS OF THE LPF'S MOOD THAT ARE AT PRESENT AVAILABLE TO US.

2. AT THE FRENCH 14TH OF JULY RECEPTION, DR KHAMSENGKEO GREETED ME EFFUSIVELY. HE IS NORMALLY FRIENDLY BUT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 VIENTI 04858 161200Z

HIS MANNER ON THIS OCCASION WAS UNUSUALLY SO. IN

ANSWERING HIS OPENING QUESTION, I INDICATED THAT WE WERE NOT PARTICULARLY WELL AND I WALTZED THROUGH LITANY OF PROBLEMS, EMPHASIZING SERIOUSNESS OF POLICE PARTICIPATION IN ACTIONS AGAINST THE EMBASSY. HE WAVED ALL THIS ASIDE, SAYING WE SHOULD BE PATIENT, EVERYTHING WOULD BE SETTLED SOON. HE EMPHASIZED THAT NO ONE HAD BEEN HURT AND "ASSURED" ME THAT AMERICANS WERE PERFECTLY SAFE IN LAOS. AFTER WE HAD GONE ROUND AND ROUND ON THIS SUBJECT FOR A BIT, HE ASKED VERY QUIETLY IF WE WERE GOING TO APPOINT TEAM TO NEGOTIATE NEW AID AGREEMENT TO HELP HEAL WOUNDS OF WAR. I ANSWERED, AS USUAL, THAT FOR VERY REASONS WE HAD JUST DISCUSSED, CLIMATE FOR NEGOTIATIONS WAS NOT PROPITIOUS; WE NEEDED A TIME TO PAUSE AND EXAMINE OUR RELATIONS. THIS VISIBLY COOLED HIM, BUT CONVERSATION WAS THEN INTERRUPTED BY OTHERS.

3. NEXT EVENING, AT ANOTHER RECEPTION, I HAD CONVERSATION WITH SOUBANH WHICH EXPLICITLY REVEALED THE DEPTH OF BITTERNESS BEHIND THE LPF DRIVE AGAINST U.S. HE STARTED BY SAYING THAT HE UNDERSTOOD WE WOULD NOT BE PROVIDING MORE AID. I PARRIED ALONG USUAL LINE, AND RAISED QUESTION OF OUR COMPOUNDS AND OTHER PROBLEMS. HIS RETORT WAS THAT THE LAO WOULD NOT BEG FOR AID, AND THAT EVERYTHING THAT HAS HAPPENED PAST TWO MONTHS IS A TRIFLE ("BAGATELLE") COMPARED TO IMMENSE LOSSES SUFFERED BY LAOS DURING 380 YEARS OF WAR. THE THOUSANDS OF DEAD CANNOT BE BROUGHT TO LIFE; NO AMOUNT OF AID CAN REPAY DEVASTATION. I ANSWERED THAT TRAGEDY OF INDOCHINA WAS THAT IT WAS ON FRONTIER OF PHILOSOPHICAL DIVIDE, AND THERE WAS NO USEFUL PURPOSE IN DEBATING HISTORY. THE PAST IS PART OF THE FUTURE, HE ANSWERED; YOU SIGNED THE PARIS AGREEMENT RECOGNIZING AN OBLIGATION TO HELP WITH RECONSTRUCTION. I COMMENTED SIMPLY THAT WE HAD ALWAYS SUPPORTED THE RLG, WHICH WAS HEADED FOR MANY YEARS BY SOUVANNA PHOUMA. HE WAVED THIS ASIDE, SAYING MINISTERS WERE PUPPETS ("FANTOCHES") AND AID WE GAVE ONLY WENT INTO THE POCKETS OF CORRUPT MEN. I SAID HE SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE HOW MUCH WORK HAD BEEN DONE BY U.S. AID, I THEN WENT ON TO COMMENT THAT HE OFTEN TALKED OF LAO PEOPLE, BUT THAT THERE WERE ALSO

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 VIENTI 04858 161200Z

AMERICAN PEOPLE AND IF HE WANTED TO UNDERSTAND USG, HE HAD TO APPRECIATE IMPORTANCE OF AMERICAN POPULAR OPINION. UNFORTUNATELY, EVENTS OF PAST THREE MONTHS HAD CREATED POOR IMPRESSION IN U.S. HIS ANSWER WAS THAT IF AID IS CUT OFF, LAO PEOPLE WOULD RECONSIDER THEIR VIEWS OF AMERICANS.

4. THE IMMEDIATE ISSUE OF THE COMPOUNDS BECAME A

FOOTNOTE TO THIS CONVERSATION, BUT SOUBANH SEEMED TO THINK THAT THEY HAD BEEN RETURNED TO US. WHEN TOLD THEY WERE STILL OCCUPIED, HE MERELY SAID EVIDENTLY ORDERS HAD NOT GOTTEN OUT; MATTER SHOULD BE SETTLED THE NEXT DAY, JULY 16. (IT HAS NOT BEEN SETTLED AS OF MID-DAY JULY 16, AT WHICH HOUR SOUBANH SAID OVER PHONE HE WOULD ASK US TO CALL ON HIM AT MFA BEFORE THE END OF THIS WEEK.)

5. LATER IN EVENING, SOUBANH TOLD AUSTRALIAN FIRST SECRETARY WILSON THAT I HAD THREATENED TO SEVER DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS (WHICH I NEVER HAVE) AND THAT I WAS NOW SAYING LAOS COULD NOT DO WITHOUT U.S. AID (WHICH I NEVER SAID). HE SAID THAT IF U.S. STOPPED AID, LAO PEOPLE WOULD HATE AMERICANS FOREVER. WILSON WAS STRUCK, AS I HAD BEEN, BY VERY EMOTIONAL TONE OF SOUBANH DURING WHOLE PRIVATE CONVERSATION.

6. COMMENTS: THESE CONVERSATIONS GIVE SUBSTANCE TO OUR EARLIER IMPRESSION THAT, CURIOUS AS IT MAY SEEM, LPF MAY ACTUALLY NEVER HAVE CONTEMPLATED THE TERMINATION OF U.S. AID. THE QUESTION WE HAVE BEEN ASKING OURSELVES -- WOULD LPF WANT DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS EVEN WITHOUT AID -- IS ONE THE LPF LEADERS MAY NEVER HAVE ASKED THEMSELVES. THEY SUFFERED HARDSHIPS FOR MANY YEARS; THE WAR WAS ENDED BY THE PARIS AGREEMENT WHICH THE U.S. SIGNED AND BY WHICH THE U.S. COMMITTED ITSELF TO RECONSTRUCT THE INDOCHINESE STATES INCLUDING LAOS; THIS COMMITMENT HAS SEEMED TO LPF ONLY JUST AND FAIR AND FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE AMERICANS IN LAOS HAVE GOTTEN AWAY VERY LIGHTLY, GIVEN RECENT HISTORY. THUS, LPF LEADERSHIP, OR AT LEAST THOSE WITH WHOM WE DEAL IN VIENTIANE, MAY REALLY NEVER HAVE IMAGINED THAT EVENTS OF MAY AND JUNE HAVE HAD ANY CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 VIENTI 04858 161200Z

IMPACT ON PROSPECTS OF FURTHER U.S. AID TO LAOS. THEY WILL NOW HAVE TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE TERMINATION OF THIS AID AT THE VERY TIME THEY ARE HAVING TO DEAL WITH GROWING DIFFICULTIES THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM -- SHORTAGES OF FOOD, UNREST IN PROVINCES, UNEMPLOYMENT, AND LOSS OF CONTROL OVER SITUATION EVEN IN VIENTIANE. THEIR REACTION TO THESE MOUNTING TROUBLES IS UNPREDICTABLE IN TERMS OF RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. IN TERMS OF INTERNAL POLICIES, WE EXPECT THAT THEY WILL TRY TO MASTER THE SITUATION WITH INCREASINGLY HEAVY APPLICATIONS OF FORCE.
CHAPMAN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975VIENTI04858
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750245-1024
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750749/aaaabrpa.tel
Line Count: 166
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <20 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EARLY LPF REACTIONS TO REALIZATION OF U.S. AID TERMINATION
TAGS: EAID, PFOR, LA, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006